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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the need for a multifarious approach to television, this paper provides the reader with the following multidimensional approaches to television criticism: rhetorical, dramatic, literary, cinematic, content analysis, myth, linguistics, semiotics, phenomenalism, phenomenology, interpersonal communication, public relations, image, classification, and criticism. The paper demonstrates how each of these approaches might be used to critique television art. For example, the section on rhetorical criticism provides the reader with "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" elements; dramatic criticism renders a schema beginning with the inciting incident and culminating with denouement; cinematic criticism offers Eisensteinian and Bazinian theories as represented in fiction and nonfiction films; image as criticism offers Boorstinian and Bazinian theories regarding pseudoevents and the relationship between images and truth; and criticism as criticism substantiates a "stylological" approach to the criticism of other television critics. (HOD)

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Television Criticism: A Multifarious Approach

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Dedication

With much affection to Sheila Ann and Monica Lynn, my daughters.

Preface

Portions of this work were presented to the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association (ISTA) November, 1983. For the published reference material see: Television Criticism: A Deca Approach, ERIC: ED 238 047 (83 49p.). The present work Television Criticism: A Multifarious Approach significantly refines the Deca Approach and adds five new major styles; also, new terms are introduced, e.g., "stylology" and "recency factor." Thus, the work presented can be considered new, insofar as it is more solidified and extensive.

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Abstract

In recent years much has been written about the need for an approach to television criticism. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to provide the reader with a varied and multi-dimensional approach to television criticism. To accomplish this goal this paper presents a multifarious approach to television criticism. The approaches are: rhetorical criticism, dramatic criticism, literary criticism, cinematic criticism, content analysis as criticism, myth as criticism, linguistics as criticism, semiotics as criticism, phenomenalism as criticism, phenomenology as criticism, interpersonal communication as criticism, public relations as criticism, image as criticism, classificiation as criticism, and criticism as criticism. These approaches are not intended to be inclusive but, instead, to mark an important beginning. Each of the critical styles can be viewed as horizontal or vertical, depending on whether or not the scholar applies these forms to criticism or research, respectively.

Television Criticism: A Multifarious Approach

Introduction

Perhaps one of the greatest criticisms of television is the lack of television criticism itself. A few contemporary scholars have conducted research concerning the theory of the application of criticism to television, namely Horace Newcomb, Bruce Gronbeck, and James W. Chesebro. Ironically, none of these scholars hails from the discipline of mass communication, yet each of them presents a viable critical approach in the analysis and synthesis of television aestheticism. Modern scholars suggest a multiple approach to television criticism. This idea, however, is not new. Richard Dyer MacCann, in his book A Montage of Theories, views film from many different vantage points: art, sculpture, literature, architecture, poetry, novel, theatre, etc. (1966). Therefore, I feel that my idea of a multifarious approach to television criticism is really based on the past work of scholars and their unique approaches to television/film criticism.

The multifarious approach to television criticism differs both quantitatively and qualitatively. First, more approaches are entertained; secondly, some newer forms of criticism are introduced; thus, the scholar is armed with a varied and multi-dimensional critical "stylology" that can be horizontal or vertical, depending on whether or not (s)he applies these forms to criticism or research.[1] The suggested approaches to television criticism are: rhetorical criticism, dramatic criticism,

literary criticism, cinematic criticism, content analysis as criticism, myth as criticism, linguistics as criticism, semiotics as criticism, phenomenalism as criticism, phenomenology as criticism, interpersonal communication as criticism, public relations as criticism, image as criticism, classification as criticism, and criticism as criticism.

The Multifarious Approach

Rhetorical Criticism

Scholars in English and Speech Communication continue the age-old argument of which came first, English or Speech. Where television is concerned it matters not, because television is an eclectic art form. Students of rhetoric can point to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and other earlier and later Greek scholars who set the first criteria for effective speaking and for the man speaking well. Rhetoricians since the Renaissance Period rediscovered the classics and added new ideas about public speaking as it related to their society. Of course, rhetoric during the Middle Ages differed considerably from rhetoric as we know it today. To begin with rhetoric embodied good writing, as well as good speaking. In the succeeding centuries, rhetoric split into two camps as they remain today: written rhetoric versus spoken rhetoric. Although the focus of each rhetoric has become specialized, many parallels can be drawn between the unique manner in which both English and Speech Communication interpret and apply rhetoric. For instance, whether we are speaking of an essay or a speech, we advise our students to tell us what they are going to tell us,

tell us, and then tell us what they told us: introduction, body, and conclusion.

The emphasis in general English and Speech is to teach correct writing and speaking skills. A myriad of books have been written over grammar, syntax, and principles of speech, and most school curricula require that these courses be offered in one or more disciplines. Television, a 20th century phenomenon, utilizes concepts of organization in much the same way they are found in English and Speech. Practically every television program, be it news, documentary, motion picture for television, situation comedy, children's program, game show, talk show, variety show, sport's event, or other genres, has a beginning, body, and a conclusion. Other television program types exist that require a sequel, i. e., soap operas, novels for television (Roots), and serials.

(Application)

It becomes the task of the television critic to recognize rhetorical elements that exist simultaneously in the "new" art form of television. Perhaps two of the most important terms associated with rhetoric that can be applied to television are "extrinsic" and "intrinsic". According to Plato, "extrinsic" refers to those elements that cause an observer to appreciate a work of art because of its utility; conversely, according to Aristotle, "intrinsic" refers to those elements that cause an observer to appreciate a work of art on its own merit. That television subscribes to both philosophies is apparent. Television becomes extrinsic when it

teaches or informs; it becomes intrinsic when it entertains; and it becomes extrinsic and intrinsic when it persuades. Television, however, has a spill-over effect, content-wise, that transcends organization and genre, and can initially be viewed as extrinsic and/or intrinsic, but rhetoric by itself is insufficient to comment on the vast panorama of this audio-visual medium; therefore, additional styles of criticism in conjunction with rhetoric must be utilized if the latter is to become meaningful.

Dramatic Criticism

Drama is distinct from rhetoric insofar as it accentuates dialogue over prose. Like rhetoric, drama owes its antecedent to the Greeks; Aristophanes, Aeschylus, and Euripides have laid the foundations for comedy and tragedy as dramatic forms. Critical approaches to rhetoric and drama differ considerably. In rhetoric the speaker, the audience, and the occasion are paramount, but drama is more representational as it substitutes actor for speaker, while it maintains audience and occasion. Perhaps the single, most important element that separates classical drama from classical rhetoric is "plot". Drama appears to be more longitudinal as it seeks to capture life. Rhetoric seems to be more concerned with the moment, the here and now. Each can be historically researched. Both are concerned with man as communicative beings. Thus, rhetoric and drama view man communicating as (s)he passes through a certain time-frame or life. Drama is, after all, "life" and life is

"conflict;" life does not exist without conflict and drama does not exist without life: they are interrelated. Although, for convenience sake, we discuss "plot" and "conflict" as separate entities, they really cannot be separated. They are one and the same. In order for something to happen, a cause and effect relationship must exist. An enzyme or catalyst must effectuate change. This change becomes plot. Change, in turn, is instigated by conflict.

Traditional dramatic criticism can be enumerated as: (1)inciting incident, (2)point of attack, (3)exposition, (4)rising and falling action, (5)major conflict, (6)minor or sub-conflicts, (7)climax, (8)anti-climax, (9)resolution, and (10)denouement, or conclusion. Variations to the above and more elaborate forms are in vogue today (Chesebro, Note 1).

(Application)

Drama's relationship to television is evident. The many dramatic programs viewed on television can benefit from dramatic criticism, e. g., films for television, soap operas, documentaries, and of course, theatre for television. When viewing a soap opera, the dramatic critic must ask what is the inciting incident; in soap operas, however, it is more appropriate to say inciting incidents because of the simultaneous dramatic conflicts manifested in previous episodes. The point of attack signifies where the drama actually begins, what the viewer sees first as the drama unfolds. The exposition is the preliminary information necessary for the viewer to comprehend the story line. The rising and

falling action refers to the events or actions that become the substance of dramatic conflict. This tugging and pulling by protagonist and antagonist eventuates in success by the forces of good, triumphant over evil, or vice versa. The major conflict is the most salient, unresolved problem that demands resolution. Minor or sub-conflicts exist as secondary and tertiary external features and off-shoots of the major conflicts. The climax occurs when one force gains domination over the other. In tragedies, quite often the hero suffers a purgation before he ultimately triumphs over his flaw, e. g., Samson and Delilah.[2] In comedies, the main character usually does not possess a flaw and consequently is allowed to triumph without purgation, e. g., I Love Lucy.[3] The anti-climax is not necessary for every drama; nevertheless, when it occurs it can be as powerful as the climax itself. Like the climax, the anti-climax happens as a consequence to the major conflict, but frequently independent of it as one force seeks to dominate the other. The resolution is the solution to all the problems up to that point. The denouement is sometimes seen as the resolution. When no resolution exists, the denouement simply concludes the drama. As mentioned earlier, new forces of dramatic criticism have emerged that may act as more precise instruments in critiquing drama. But classical dramatic criticism is still a viable manner by which the scholar can critique television.

Literary Criticism

Literary criticism differs significantly from dramatic criticism. In

many respects the dramatic critic has a decided advantage over the literary critic because the elements, e. g., exposition, plot and conflict, are more salient. Two of the major elements found in literature are prose and poetry. It becomes difficult, if not impossible, to discern where prose ends and poetry begins. Prose is the eloquent weaving of statements that collectively comprise a greater statement. Not all language and statements loosely fitted together can be defined as prose. The works of Balzac, Cervantes, Milton, Dryden, and Hemingway exemplify extended refinement. Poetry differs from prose in its rhythmic nature. Tribes in antiquity celebrated the hunt, wars, harvest and other social events in dance and poetic song. Evidence of this exists in the dance and songs of contemporary primitive man.

Prose and poetry merge when the story line is introduced. Nearly everyone is familiar with the Chancon de Roland and Cancion de mio Cid; both are examples of the earliest French and Spanish ballads, According to Thrall, Hibbard and Homan (1960: 42), a ballad is "a form of verse adapted for singing or recitation and primarily characterized by its presentation in a simple narrative form of a dramatic or exciting episode." An episode, dramatic or ordinary, is a story--usually concerning someone significant. A story has point of view. Thus, the television critic might consider the intertwining of prose, poetry, ballad, story, and point of view in critiquing television programming that lends itself to this type of scrutiny.

Films may be labeled prosaic or poetic. Point of view, however, "describes the way in which the reader is presented with materials of the story, or viewed from another angle, the vantage point from which the author presents the actions of the story" (p. 371). In this sense, point of view can be found in drama as well as prose and poetry: (1)a story (2)told in action (3)by actors who impersonate the characters of the story (p. 150). Terms incorporated by point of view are: omniscient, first-person narrator, naive or disingenuous narrator, third person, interior monologue, panoramic, scenic, and self-effacing author (p. 371).

(Application)

The literary critic critiquing the novel for television can use point of view to define the author's/writer's presentation of the story. Orson Welles' Citizen Kane (Johnson, 1974: 123) utilizes omniscient camera. The camera becomes an all-knowing Maker transcending time, place, and character as it moves freely in order to comment at will (Thrall et al, 1960: 371). However, when a character within the story discusses the story as (s)he experienced it, then (s)he is called a first-person narrator; if the character does not comprehend what (s)he says, then (s)he is called a naive or disingenuous narrator; third person refers to a single character who tells the story; the author/writer may restrict the materials presented to the interior responses of the character relating the story: this point of view is called the interior monologue;

when the author/writer presents the story as a series of episodes in summary form, (s)he is using a panoramic point of view; when no authorial comment is evident and where the actions and conversations are presented in detail and with objectivity, the point of view is scenic; and, if the author does not speak in his/her own person and is absent from the scenes (s)he presents, (s)he is a self-effacing author (p. 371).

In contemporary television many novels and similar programming that utilizes prose and poetry can be viewed and scrutinized by applying point of view. Again, literary criticism juxtaposed to television, as with previously mentioned critical styles/forms, can benefit by allying itself with additional critical styles/forms.

Cinematic Criticism

Two of the foremost film aestheticians are Sergei M. Eisenstein and Andre Bazin. The Russian, Eisenstein, lays his theoretical framework in two books: Film Sense and Film Form. The Frenchman, Bazin, sets his theoretical principles in two books: What is Cinema? Vol. I and What is Cinema? Vol. II.

Eisenstein, drama director turned filmmaker, says montage is the basis of all filmmaking. Montage can be enumerated as: (1)metric, (2) rhythmic, (3)tonal, (4)overtonal, and (5)intellectual (Eisenstein, 1949: 72-83). Eisenstein relates that metric consists of the absolute length of the pieces that comprise the entire film. It should be noted immediately that Eisenstein draws an almost exact corollary with music. Music utilizes

metric as a form of measurement. Music analysis, then, becomes a convenient way by which the reader can understand Eisensteinian conceptualization of film. Rhythmic, as in music, becomes the action within the frame--all variations of rhythm a piece may suggest. In music, rhythm can be determined as timing: e. g., 2/4, 3/8, 3/4, 6/8, 4/4, 9/8; in dance, rhythm may be identified as being waltz, foxtrot, rhumba, tango, samba, etc. Thus, time in a film has two values for Eisenstein: its metric value and its rhythmic value. Or, stated another way, "real" time versus "perceived-psychological" time. Tonal refers to the dominant-chord that strikes the viewer as (s)he interacts with the film. The dominant-chord impinges on our emotional sensibility and this emotional chord moves us toward a fuller realization of the filmmaker's intentions. Overtonal is closely related to tonal. All of the subtle nuances suggested in the piece evoke a realization of the full impact of the dominant-chord. In Louis Bunuel's Los Olvidados, juvenile delinquents physically mistreat senior citizens and the rest of society seems unable to deal effectively with this teenage problem (Johnson, 1974: 112). The problem is the dominant-chord and society's inertia is the nuance: tonal and overtonal. Intellectual montage is the most difficult of Eisensteinian thought to comprehend. For this writer, intellectual montage equates abstraction, the highest level of man's creative ability. Eisenstein's montage process is sequential, beginning with metric and culminating with intellectual. Intellectual montage, moreover, is iconic; iconicism has a

visual relationship to the referent because it very closely resembles the "thing" it stands for. Icons, unlike symbols, are not arbitrary or capricious. Icons and symbols, as well as signals, are signs (see Semiotics as Criticism). In 2001: A Space Odyssey, a huge bone whirling through space becomes a spaceship. For primitive man, the bone can be viewed as an instrument and weapon; for modern man, the spaceship can be viewed in the same manner: intellectual montage.

The most formidable critic after Sergei M. Eisenstein is Andre Bazin. Although he himself never made any films, he became the spokesman for the Italian Neo-Realism School that is the progenitor of today's cinema verite. Bazin is the complete antithesis to Eisenstein--diametrically opposed. Where Eisenstein views film as a "plastic" art from, Bazin views film as "reality". In his now famous essay "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," Bazin says that Picasso is now the mythical central figure who freed art from the "resemblance complex": the modern painter abandons traditional art so that today the masses identify resemblance with photography and the kind of painting that is related to photography. Bazin has a great deal to say on how the cinematographer shoots a scene. Bazin believes that the filmmaker actually "records", rather than "shoots", a film, i. e., "The personality of the photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed and by way of purpose he has in mind" (Bazin, 1971: 13). Bazin says "In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to

accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually re-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction" (pp. 13-14). Bazin succinctly states ". . . for photography does not create eternity, as art does, it enbalms time, rescuing it simply from its proper corruption" (p. 14). He summarizes by saying "Every image is to be seen as an object and every object as an image. Hence, photography ranks high in the order of surrealist creativity because it produces an image that is a reality of nature, namely, an hallucination that is also a fact" (pp. 15 16). From what has been said, the filmmaker has been presented with a dichotomy.

(Application)

What appears to be a dichotomy is, in reality, two sides of the same coin. Therefore, the filmmaker may choose Eisenstein, Bazin, or both to accomplish his/her filmmaking goals. Depending on the filmmaker's philosophy (s)he may view film as being more "plastic" than "reality", or vice versa. The critic realizing the dichotomous nature of film makes allowances for the myriad possibilities that lie between these respective polarities. Generally speaking, we have experienced in our lifetime the Hollywood film and the documentary film as made for television. It might be noted that the film may not be a film, at all, but a videotape. In this case, the viewer experiences a different visual sensitivity because of the unique properties germane to film and videotape, respectively.

Finally, the critic, armed with Eisensteinian and Bazinian theoretical principles of filmmaking, can approach a film or videotape program that bears a strong resemblance to the Hollywood/documentary tradition and not doubt his/her criticism.

Content Analysis as Criticism

When researchers speak of content analysis, they usually are referring to quantitative and qualitative factors. By quantitative they mean enumeration of anything capable of being enumerated. Quite often statistics are employed, particularly if the design is complex or sophisticated. Besides quantitative factors the analysts must consider qualitative factors. By qualitative they mean kind or type, genre or classification. Biologists, for example, use a hierarchy that enables them to compare and contrast similarities and differences from a single "thing": a rose, to larger "things", flowers. Anthropologists can compare a tribe to a race, or they may wish to contrast the two. After comparing and contrasting any two "things", a relationship can be drawn; rules can be stated; hypotheses/predictions can be made; experiments can be conducted; and, ultimately, models can be created (Boston, 1972). But first, the "thing" must be identified in much the same way environmentalists tag migratory animals to make certain they have not confused the subject. Throughout all of the aforementioned, the analyst must be sure the sample has not been contaminated so that inter-coder reliability is not compromised. Reliability is critical--without it, the entire study fails.

As human beings, today, we are subjected to a variety of government identifications for purposes of taxation (social security number), traveling abroad (passport numbers), voting (voter registration numbers), etc. (If we each examine our driver's license, we find that the most important number on the license is not the license number at all, but the government number that identifies us as a number!) Just as numbers are employed by government statisticians, we too can utilize the quantitative side of content analysis to critique television. Statistics need not be used. Simple data can be just as effective, if what we seek is contained and does not overwhelm.

(Application)

Before the television program begins, the analyst should research the program to determine what (s)he is specifically seeking, what questions need to be answered, and what parameters will be used to maintain limits. (One cannot hope to do everything, even in an elaborate study.) Content analysis as applied to television criticism may require several people to observe specific actions, e. g., the number of times a character appears on the screen. If time or duration is being recorded, then a stopwatch is needed. With regard to qualitative factors, we may wish to denote who is viewed as the most prestigious character by listing what we consider more important: money, position, career, ability, appearance, etc. Although we are attempting to be objective, we cannot escape subjectivity; the fact that we select "this" over "that" and emphasize "this" over

"that" indicates we are being subjective. Documentary film/video suffers the same consequences. What matters is that the analyst tell the reader-viewer exactly what (s)he did and why (s)he did it. In this fashion, the reader-viewer can draw his/her own conclusions.

Myth as Criticism

Until a few years ago, myth was considered as something false. Many psychologists today, however, find that the study of myth as an investigative tool is extremely helpful in predicting human behavior. Joseph Campbell, borrowing from psychologist Carl Jung, has written extensively concerning myth's relationship to man and his historical development (Note 2).

According to Campbell, myth has four functions: metaphysical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological (Keen, 1971: 35). Metaphysical is divided into two categories, ontology and cosmology. The former corresponds to the reality behind existence and the latter pertains to the universe as an orderly system. The sociological and psychological components refer to the group and the individual within the group. In discussing the metaphysical function, Campbell relates that myths have helped man find his/her way in the dark by giving him/her something to believe in, e. g., "The Apostles' Creed" (p. 35). We speak of "Father Sky" and "Mother Earth" and this, in part, explains the cosmological function: The union of the sky and earth. Myths have aided society by providing man with "rites of passage". Girls grow up to become women

and boys grow up to become men. This sociological function is demonstrated today in a variety of ways, e. g., a college degree, a debutante ball, a bar mitzvah, an Eagle Scout award, a Miss America title, etc. Man strives for recognition, expecially if the society in which he lives is competitive. Myth rewards man by bestowing a degree, title or some outward manifestation suggesting achievement. Without this recognition, we lack the proper armor to defend ourselves against the hostile forces of man and nature. Recognition tells us that we can succeed because we have succeeded.

The last function and possibly the most important is the psychological function. This function provides us with a "marked pathway." Traditionally, the Arthurian Knights met at a round table to discuss their past, present, and future exploits. Campbell states that to be a knight one had to enter the deepest and darkest part of the forest; he had to go where no man had gone before (p. 89). By accomplishing this feat, the knight created a "marked pathway" for others to follow. Today, astronauts and cosmonauts and a host of men and women in various professions risk their lives because they are dedicated to the highest principles of life: they are providing us with a "marked pathway." Again, Campbell borrows heavily from Jungian psychology. Jung's Mandala Theory can be traced to Oriental metaphysics. Whether or not we subscribe to Jungian metaphysics and his idea concerning a "collective unconscious," we can relate to the "known" and the "unknown". When we become the first

member of our family to travel to a foreign place, we venture into the dark side of the forest. When we return from our quest, we emerge triumphant because we have survived.

(Application)

Television provides us with many examples that directly illustrate the metaphysical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological functions. Programs like Fantasy Island and Loveboat present us with images of nature. Nature, in turn, creates a union of divergent, natural elements. For example, colorful birds, lagoons, wildflowers, waterfalls, and other elements combine with palm trees and exotic plants to create a tropical island. In the same fashion, a ship, boarded by passengers, unites with water to make a pleasure cruise possible.

Television also provides us with many examples of "rites of passage". Any time we see a character receiving some type of recognition, we can analyze this activity as a sociological function. A war film may show a young officer being decorated for his valor. During the Olympic Games a young girl receives the Gold Medal for her performance on the high dive.

Television, finally, demonstrates the psychological function when televisions's heroes, through their actions, teach us how to be better than we are and how to survive our own human frailties. Captain Kirk, the commander of the Enterprise in Star Trek, subjects himself to pain and punishment at the hands of aliens to protect his crew. His crew members admire him because of his noble character and they are only too

willing to protect their captain. Many examples of lesser heroism are found in a variety of television programs that demonstrate a genuine caring of one human being for another.

Linguistics as Criticism

Linguistics is now more than a century old. As an academic area it has been the domain of English and foreign language, speech communication, speech pathology and audiology, and theatre arts. One of the greatest contributions of linguistics is the identification of a one-to-one relationship between a sound and its symbol. To demonstrate this point linguistics at its foundation uses phonemes, e. g., "i" equals "e" (i=e) so that the word "he" is spelled h-i; phonemes come together to formulate morphemes (as a unit); morphemes combine to formulate syllables; syllables unite to formulate words; and words are placed in a systematic order to formulate phrases. At this level we can examine the syntax or structure of any language.

Although some linguists place syntax and grammar at the same level, in actuality grammar is one step above syntax, because the grammar of a particular language represents the totality of the language. At this level it becomes meaningful to speak of sentences as complete ideas that express the will of individuals, or of people. From grammar a lexical develops. The lexical is the vocabulary, words, and morphemes of a language. In speech communication the student is taught that there is no meaning in words; people have meaning. However, for convenience sake,

we say that the meaning of "such-and-such" is "this." In brief, words are symbols that point to a referent that stand in place of the "thing" itself.

Beyond the lexical are the psycho-sociological and the philosophical levels. Each of us over time and space has developed our own psychology of speech; i. e., no one can speak exactly the same way we speak. In a real sense, our language cannot be separated from who we are. Even when an artist "cuts a record," we are faced with the examination of a hallucination in much the same way a photograph is a hallucination of the object photographed. Phenomena and hallucinations exist and, therefore, can be considered part of reality. A hologram is another example of a hallucination that is observable and, therefore, can be considered part of reality. We can examine, however, a person's language in his/her absence. Many of the statements made about the psychology of language can be made of the sociology of language. People who have lived in Boston and can trace their ancestry to its founding fathers, as a collective, will use and make the English language uniquely their own. In this sense, linguists are apt to use the word "isogloss." An isogloss, more specifically, might be the Amish, the Mennonites, or Quakers who have retained the traditional language of their forefathers, with little or no change.

Ultimately, we arrive at the philosophical level. Philosophy is the highest level to which man can aspire. At this level, a philosophy of an individual, tribe, nation, race, or corporation is formulated. Sometimes

nations will follow the philosophy of a specific writer; e. g., China and the Soviet Union are considered Marxists because they endorse the philosophy of Karl Marx. The purpose of philosophy is to make available knowledge to the uninitiated.

(Application)

As we interact with television, we are deluged with a plethora of language. Cable Television has made many channels available to people throughout the world, particularly in the U.S.A. Today, we receive programming via satellite from remore areas. Sometimes the language is not English and the customs of the speakers differ considerably from our own. Television teaches. Teachers are foolish when they negate the influence and real power of television. Television speaks. Linguistics, as applied to television criticism, must be used to analyze the language of television. The critic, who chooses a linguistic approach to television criticism, has both a formidable challenge and a tremendous responsibility. To understand language we must be able to "decode" the "encoded" messages. Our task becomes difficult, if not impossible, due to our limited perspective. Just as a person cannot see everything in the room no matter where (s)he stands, so, too, we as Americans cannot perceive the entire world from our uniquely American position. The critic is advised to work at all levels of linguistics vis-a-vis television so that his/her audience can be apprised of the multi-faceted linguistic dimensions of this panoramic medium--television.

Semiotics as Criticism

Practically speaking, the science of semiotics is less than a hundred years old. Some names associated with the evolution of this science are: Charles Morris, Jean Mitry, Christian Metz, Pier Paulo Pasolini, Gianfranco Bettetini, et al. Semiology is the study of the science of signs and their meanings. Moreover, semiotics (semiology) is to the visual sense what linguistics is to the aural sense. Where linguistics has been able to codify a hierarchy from phoneme to the sentence and beyond, the replication of this codification for semiotics has become a much slower process. In fact, many film aestheticians would argue that there can never be a film language of the conventional sort, because of the multifarious nature of film; the implications of a single "shot" seem infinite. Nevertheless, semioticians have attempted to formulate a codification and hierarchy for the visual sense; they are also concerned with a second semiological dimension in which significant objects are opposed by virtue of conjunctive and disjunctive relations: these two dimensions are described as syntagmatic and paradigmatic, respectively. Not all semioticians are in accord with the possibility of these two dimensions as totally encompassing filmic language, if it indeed exists at all. Bettetini maintains, "On the level of the fundamental codifications and on the level of narrative structures, it is perhaps possible to risk establishing analogical relationships (with all the dangers that this involves) which are more effective and useful than they would be in the

ambit of elementary signs" (1973: 71). Or stated simply, a need exists to continue the study of semiotics, because of what it promises.

In discussing syntagms, Umberto Eco speaks of tertiary articulation of cinematographic language due to the fact that the technical instrument reproduces a reality that is a movement. He elaborates, "In the code that would lie behind every film one could thus single out the figurae (a restricted number of units) which would combine to form signs (without being a part of their signified), the signs which would combine to form syntagms, and finally elements X which would arise from the combination of signs that would not form a part of their signified" (Bettetini, 1973: 66-67). Here, the signifier is that which signifies or points to a particular idea, concept, or thing. The signified is the thing itself, that which is signified, or in linguistic terminology, the referent. A referent, or the signified, is critical in the study of linguistics and semiotics, respectively: they both lock symbol and sign to reality. For example, at the phoneme level of linguistics no lockage exists: they "do not have an independent signified of their own" (p. 39). The same might be said of the elements that make up the image, e. g., shot, angle, lighting, etc. Bettetini does not expound on conjunctive and disjunctive vis-a-vis semiotics, except to say the concern is with objects in opposition. This writer is confident that semiotics will continue to evolve as a science and, like linguistics, contribute significantly to the understanding of the visual arts as they relate to life.

(Application)

Initially, the critic who employs semiotics as a tool to critique television must take into account the differences between television and film. Just as many similarities exist, so, too, do many differences exist. There is a similarity of aspect ratio and a two-dimensional surface. Also, there is a similarity in the striking manner in which reality is reproduced for both media. The content for both, of course, can be the same, although different artistic direction may be utilized for each. Unless we are concerned about a film made especially for television, the substance might vary considerably; e. g., it is unlikely that we will view a game show made for film. In other words, television carries programming that is unique to television. Films, conversely, are apt to be more involved and of longer duration from a technical and production point of view.

Differences between television and film are varied and include such elements as film (silver nitrate base) versus videotape (electro-magnetic base). Because film contains frames that can be seen naturally, without a machine, whereas videotape requires a monitor, each differs in the way its projected image reproduction impinges on the retina via the optic nerve to the brain. Normally speaking, film is projected onto a much larger screen. Film is usually viewed by a much larger audience in a darkened theatre or similar public setting. Most movies normally run ninety minutes; television video programs are of varying lengths. For

this writer the temporal relationship between film and videotape are distinctly non-aligned; i. e., film is past tense while videotape is present tense. Furthermore, television is easier to see on-the-run: the videotape recorder revolution has made television viewing convenient.

How does all this relate to critiquing television using semiotics? Whether film or videotape, the "language of cinema" is the same. Bettetini, in schema form, has drawn a relationship between linguistics (verbal) and semiotics (non-verbal) systems. As stated previously, he lists technical elements that make up the image: shot, lighting, angle, etc. He continues by defining cinemes (or iconemes) as having a unitary and almost independent signified of their own and expressing an intention. At this level, cinemes correspond to phrases in a sentence whereas the former correspond to phonemes. The camera, he elaborates, "breaks down the cinemorphs into a large number of discrete units that cannot yet signify anything by themselves, and that have a differential value with respect to other discrete units" (p. 67). The reference here is the individual cinematic frame or icon. The code is as follows: the figurae or frames (a restricted number of units) combine to form signs (without being a part of their signified), the signs produce in combination syntagms that continue to add up ad infinitum.

How does a critic employ an unfinished science, like semiotics, to cinematic and television art? Bettetini writes that we should begin at the technical-grammatical elements of the film.[4] One, however, need not

be a film theorist before jumping into the waters. When the critic begins by analyzing all of the properties and elements within the figurae (frames), (s)he understands that a second and tertiary level is evident in all films. Just concentrating on the lighting alone of a specific film can tell us a great deal about the film and its director; an analysis of camera angles eventuates as directorial style; an examination of clothing in a western film may suggest whether or not the protagonist is good or evil; a determination of the style of furniture presented within the frame may lead to signs that later point to a signification, or signified. Third World cultures and developing nations, it seems, are more concerned with the second and tertiary levels of film. Certain American films, e. g., Poltergeist, E. T., Ordinary People convey an opulence more than story line or plot. Perhaps these serious considerations should move us to examine what our film and videotape is really communicating to the rest of the world.

Phenomenalism and Phenomenology as Criticism

Phenomenalism and phenomenology may both be characterized as naturalistic inquiry. Conceptualization of phenomenalism and phenomenology varies greatly as a method of research. Important names associated with phenomenalism and phenomenology are Michael Q. Patton, Egon G. Guba, Paul F. Colaizzi, and Rolf von Eckartsberg. Phenomenal study is associated with Patton and Guba and phenomenological study is associated with Colaizzi and Von Eckartsberg. Phenomenal study, stated simply, is

descriptive, includes many objects as subjects of observation, and uses empirical data but without the researcher's reflection (Colaizzi, 1973: 29-30). Phenomenological study is similar to phenomenal study with the exception that the former utilizes the investigator's reflection, but it may involve individual reflection without empirical data.

In phenomenal study, the researcher becomes an instrument for an observational inquiry, while at the same time bracketing, guarding against biases. Guba calls for a neutrality of inquiry, putting objectivity or subjectivity aside (Guba and Lincoln, 1981: 128-52). Patton, however, says the researcher is a qualitative factor when (s)he moves closer to the object of observation, as opposed to a quantitative factor when the researcher is detached (Patton, 1980: 131-2); in this sense, "closer" means subjective or internal, and "detached" means objective or external. Moreover, bracketing, the removal of biases, assists the researcher in his/her attempt to discover the essence of experience.

In phenomenological study, a co-constituted world exists where no split between the subject and the object is possible; phenomenal study, conversely, splits the interactive world by placing subject and object in separate hemispheres. Von Eckartsberg says "we know from personal experience and from studies in the social psychology of the experiment that we have a much more complicated inter-human situation in a psychological laboratory experiment than hitherto described or acknowledged" (1971: 70). From this we may deduce that naturalistic inquiry maintains

objectivity that goes beyond the type associated with traditional scientific laboratory experimentation and is, therefore, appropriate for existential-experiential investigation.

Phenomenal and phenomenological studies gather data by (1)listing detailed descriptions of situations, people and their behavior; (2)direct quotations from people about their experiences and attitudes; and (3) excerpts from recorded histories (Patton, 1980: 28).

In phenomenal study the researcher collects descriptive data from many subjects (does not include self as subject); whereas, the individual phenomenological reflection (IPR) researcher acquires data from him/herself: data is purely reflective. Empirical phenomenological reflection (EPR) involves the researcher's reflection on "implicit" dimensions of organized data or "explicit" empirical data (Colaizzi, 1973; 33). (Phenomenal study organizes empirical data with no difinitive results.) Also, phenomenological reflection uses two types of subject matter descriptions; they are: fundamental descriptions (FD) or the essence of a phenomenon as it is experienced and fundamental structure (FS) as the essence of an experiential phenomenon as it is revealed by explication (p. 33).

Phenomenological study utilizes a three-step process of description, reduction (definition), and interpretation to explicate the data. Phenomenal study may or may not employ the three-step process. Phenomenalism (phenomenal), as a process, moves from a generalized-universal to a

particular; conversely, phenomenology (phenomenological) yields a higher order abstraction as a universal (Parcells, 1983: 16).

(Application)

Television criticism lends itself extremely well to both phenomenalism and phenomenology. In phenomenalism, the television critic may observe a group watching television. After the viewing, the critic may write a detailed description of the group's experience of watching television; in addition, (s)he may interview the various viewers to determine their specific reactions to the television program. Ultimately, the three-step process may be used.

The critic may choose phenomenology over phenomenalism, not because it is superior, but rather, because it presents a different perspective. In phenomenology, the critic steps out of the world to view him/herself as an instrument and/or observer: in this circumstance (s)he is schematically interlocked with the object (s)he is observing insofar as they become a co-constituted world. From this elevated perspective, (s)he becomes acutely aware of his/her own awareness. Moreover, (s)he is concerned with his/her own reactions to the world of event (s)he experiences. Here, the critic comes to realize the validity of using him/herself as an instrument of observation. The reflective process assists the critic in coming to terms with the event (s)he has experienced.

In conclusion, the phenomenal critic must take care to bracket

(remove his/her biases) so that his/her impartiality yields correct information. The phenomenological critic depends equally on his/her powers of concentration, but from a different vantage point; (s)he employs reflection concentrating on his/her own experience in a co-constituted world. Phenomenalism and phenomenology are closely associated with the social science of psychology. Many parallels can be drawn between the two seemingly different styles just as psychology has been able to contribute significantly to our understanding of human behavior; so, too, will phenomenalism and phenomenology, as applied to television criticism, contribute significantly to our understanding of human behavior via television.

Interpersonal Communication as Criticism

There was a time when speech scholars disdained the notion of interpersonal communication as a viable area of study. These scholars maintained that essentially only one area of speech exists: rhetoric. Of course, they were promoting the Hellenic-Latin tradition of oratory, otherwise known as public speaking. There still exists today the idea that rhetoric, itself, is fully capable of managing the whole of communication theory. Despite the plethora of basic speech communication courses taught at American universities, interpersonal communication seems to have a closer affinity to the future than to the past. Its respectability is on the horizon.

What is interpersonal communication? It may be easier to answer

what it is not. It certainly is not intrapersonal communication: communication with oneself. Strictly speaking, it does not qualify as public communication. Some comparison may be drawn to group communication. Group communication is usually set between three and twelve people. A group of twelve is exceedingly large. But when the number is three, a triad, some speech scholars would say that interpersonal communication exists, rather than group communication.

Interpersonal communication, then, exists when dyads and triads are formed. Human beings seem to possess an inherent need to communicate with at least one other person. Without dyadic or triadic encounters, communication, as we know it, would change drastically. Imagine if a speaker were required to speak to four or more individuals each time (s)he wished to communicate: groups of four or more would have to congregate to hear the speaker's message. In our society the foregoing hyperbole is ridiculous. Conversely, children who find themselves in the care of relatives tend to save their intimate interpersonal communication for their parents. In this manner, they protect the bond of individuality they feel with their parents. However, once four or more adults gather, adults tend to lose their personal sense of individuality.

Interpersonal communication must be confined to two or three people. This small unit allows trust and expediency. The singular element, most important to all of communication, is trust. Relationships grow from trust. Marriages of various sorts are founded on trust. When trust is

formed, ethos (esteem) rises in the individual. We are more inclined to feel a strong pathos (emotion) for someone we cherish. Of the two, ethos and pathos, the former is more dependent upon trust. Logos, (logic), moreover, is further removed from ethos and pathos because its basis is purely analytical. Trust is necessary to establish meaningful relationships and to achieve esteem; pathos relies more on charity than trust; whereas, logos, once established, creates trust. If something is logical, we can trust it. The cycle is thus complete (Aristotle, Note 3).

Interpersonal communication prepares the individual for the larger setting: group communication and public communication. Together they prepare the individual for life.

(Application)

The substance of television is life. In a real sense, mass communication is not an extension of public communication. All forms of communication require a channel. Before mankind chose pictures/pictograms to encode messages for posterity, mankind's channel was the simple air we breathe (Mallo, Note 4). Print and electronic media, then, extend the channel capacity and capability, particularly when the channel is electronic. Television is an eclectic medium: television literally means distant viewing: tele vision. Its capacity is extended through modern satellites systems that permit instant and simultaneous coverage of any event taking place in the world: inner and outer space are not excluded.[5] Its capability, like film, is enhanced when it subsumes practically every

other art form. Interpersonal communication is such an art.

When we view two characters on our favorite soap opera discussing the meaning of their lives, we are witnessing a communication interaction. The characters are exchanging more than information; they are exchanging a profound essences of their existence. No wonder soap operas continue their popularity! Interpersonal communication is ubiquitous in television programming, e. g., talk shows, news, game shows, variety shows, children's shows and documentaries. In the latter instance we must remember that communication is not confined to human beings; programs like Wild Kingdom impart substantial information about how animals communicate, which, in turn, teaches us how to communicate.

There are two stages of interpersonal communication that occur vis-a-vis television. The first stage is the communication we observe between and among the various personae. The second stage, and for our purposes the more important, is the communication we engage in concerning the respective situations observed on television. We tend to comment about what we see and hear on television both while the event is in progress and long after the set is turned off. American audiences today have achieved a high degree of visual literacy, a literacy almost foreign to pre-20th century audiences. Spectators have existed as far back as man himself. The Roman Colosseum is just one example of this phenomenon. When critics say they are fearful of man becoming passive in his/her role as a spectator, the assertion seems unfounded historically. Spectators are

rarely, if ever, passive. Television, like Greek theatres of antiquity, provides its audience with mythic spectacles (Shroyer and Gardemal, Note 5). Human beings require stimulation. In this manner television becomes the stimulus and post-program interpersonal communication becomes the response. Thus, a communal relationship exists between the programmer and the viewer.

The question arises: can interpersonal communication exist between a television producer/writer and an audience (s)he may never see? An artist will attempt to predict the reaction of his/her aficionados. But until the actual performance (s)he cannot completely be certain of that reaction. Nevertheless, throughout the artist's rehearsal or preparation the thrust and purpose intended is communication. Performing artists rarely work alone. An actor discusses his characterization with his acting coach or director: interpersonal communication; an anchorwoman discusses her performance with her news director: interpersonal communication; a husband discusses a television newsbrief with his wife; interpersonal communication. Throughout the television process interpersonal communication is taking place.

The television critic may choose to follow the television process as it relates to interpersonal communication from beginning to end. Or, (s)he may concentrate on one facet of the process. Horace Newcomb has said he chooses to concentrate on the interpersonal communication that takes place about television after the viewers are removed from the event

(Newcomb, Note 6). These talks may take place at the office, at a bar, in the home, at church, at the supermarket, or any number of places. Donald Wood says the receiver selects from various media to determine which best satisfies him/her (Wood, 1983). Again the viewer is placed in an active speaking and involved mode. The critic in choosing interpersonal communication as a critical style should concentrate on the qualitative aspects of communication. (S)he must ask him/herself what element of truth exists between the participants of the communication encounter, as presented via television. (S)he may also elect to discuss with a selected subject the substance of any television program after viewing it. Interviews, like this, help to put the event into perspective. Lang and Lang demonstrated how radically different the television event is when intimately viewed at home, rather than in person (Lang and Lang, 1956). In the interview situation, the critic should strive for an objective journalistic sensitivity that approaches the truth. There can be no substitute for truth in interpersonal communication.

Public Relations as Criticism

Probably one of the most misunderstood areas is public relations (PR). In the last decade, public relations disciplines have mushroomed throughout the world, especially in the United States. Today, students and scholars in PR can point to state, regional, national, and international associations. Many public relations disciplines fall under the umbrella of communications, i. e., speech communication, journalism and

English. In actuality, public relations is an inter-disciplinary field that requires expertise in speech, journalism, English, and business. Thus, a PR person must be able to communicate effectively both orally and verbally, as well as be able to understand the business of business.

A working definition that indicates the nature of public relations might be: communication by an individual or individuals representing a business, institution, or similar organization, profit or non-profit, that has as its purpose communication with its various publics (Meussling, Note 7). Public relations goes beyond any definition that may be ascribed to it. Public relations is found in many different settings, e. g., United Nations, nation to nation, nation to citizenry, corporation to corporation, corporation to public, institution to institution, institution to constituencies, and combinations of all of the aforementioned. The importance of PR cannot be overstated. People have taken differing views concerning the role of public relations in our society. Purists argue that PR is so broad as to be meaningless. Modernists counter by saying that it, when used effectively, holds the greatest promise for peace in an unstable world.

Public relations is not advertising nor is it propaganda. Advertising tends to be overt and direct; propaganda, conversely, tends to be covert and indirect: that is not to say their roles cannot interchange. Advertising, by and large, promotes a product. In some cases the product may be an idea, e. g., "Seven days and six nights in exciting Mexico City."

Propaganda is normally associated with a quest to establish and maintain a political power base. During the 20th century we have seen numerous examples of governments rising, staying, and falling from power due to propaganda efforts. Speakers like Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin are remembered because of their persuasive communication tactics. Communication scholars differentiate between persuasion and coercion: both can be tools of propaganda. Normally speaking, propaganda favors persuasion over coercion. Force is usually taken as a communication mode when all other avenues used to bring about change or maintenance have failed: a last resort.

Public relations, although not advertising nor propaganda, does resemble each when it seeks to sell, promote, or convince. The first purpose of PR is to represent accurately the position of a company or concern. A company, for example, needs to maintain a good public image if it wishes to stay in business. When business declines, quite often the basis may have little to do with the product's reliablity and effectiveness. In a capitalistic society, goods compete with other goods and a product, in general, must show a profit if it is to survive.[6]

The second purpose of PR is to establish credibility or ethos. If the company is to survive, it must prove to its publics that it is credible. Nations, like companies. experience the same fate where credibility is concerned. Nations and companies, like individuals, must convince others of their worthiness when they seek approval that, in

turn, is translated into rewards, e. g., loans, lower tariffs, adjustments in quotas, etc. (Oseguera, Note 8). A company depends on PR to maintain and reattain its source of credibility. In times of difficulty public relations, more than any other facet of the company's endeavors, sustains its credibility.[7]

(Application)

When a corporation chooses to communicate with its publics, it will choose television. Year after year, television continues to be the most credible of all media sources. Thus, credibility begets credibility. In this manner a corporation enhances its chances to inform and persuade: in order to convince someone, we must persuade (Oseguera and Leyden, 1983). The fact that television can and does charge exorbitant fees to advertisers is indicative of the medium's power. Therefore, a corporation or organization understands that how its message or image is treated by television becomes crucial and consequential in promoting its welfare. Essentially an organization is viewed by the public from two perspectives: first, when the organization relates to its publics through advertisements, press releases, or special events where it occupies public attention (or the media's attention); and second, where the media examines the activity of the organization. From both perspectives, how the organization is treated by the media will cause emotional and intellectual readjustments by the viewers vis-a-vis the organization. The adjustments may result in a negative or positive view of the organization and what it represents.

The television critic, understanding the responsibility and the role that public relations plays in conveying the organization's truth via television to its various publics, may evaluate television's message as emanating from a specific source with a specific intent. Being reared in American society, the critic knows which companies, organizations, and institutions appear most on television; they become apparent to visitors from other nations after a short period of television viewing. In many cases, corporations are multi-nationals and advertise abroad almost as often as they do at home.[8] The critic comprehending international relationships extends his view of television by noting the impact of an organization's message when it is presented unilaterally.

Despite television's influence, the critic must also realize that advertising is not the exclusive domain of television. Thus, witnessing an advertising campaign requires a critic's panoramic view of the media, e. g., newspapers, magazines, radio, cassettes, and billboards. By making media comparisons, the critic arrives at an approximation of the organization's real intent. Advertising, as previously stated, is only one facet by which the critic may evaluate an organization's public relations. Sometimes public service announcements (PSAs) yield inciteful information concerning an organization's purpose.

When an organization conveys its meaning in a news event, the television critic should also compare other media treatment in an effort to obtain a holistic view. As with other critical styles, objectivity

benefits the critic when comparing and contrasting media treatment. Ultimately, the television critic, using public relations as a style of criticism, focuses his/her attention on power groups as they endeavor to communicate with their publics.

Image as Criticism

According to the Holy Bible, man was created in the image and likeness of God. What human being is not concerned with how (s)he is perceived by friends and foes? Daniel Boorstin, in his astounding book, Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America, has paved the way for future scholars desirous of obtaining information about image (Boorstin, 1977). Boorstin relates that sometimes the pursuit of an obtainable image may create a falsity about ourselves, an idea, or product; that is to say, the image and the reality are not the same. The word "travel", for example, really means work, if it is traced etymologically. Prior to the 20th century, travel was work. Since then, travel is pleasurable. "Travel" as a term is diametrically opposite its original meaning. Nevertheless, there has been no need to change or create another word to replace it. Throughout his book, Boorstin provides us with example after example that help us understand how the world itself has moved half-circle and in opposition to its original position. Ironically, this movement, he says, has served only to curtail movement. We cannot leave home because, when we arrive, we find that one place looks very similar to another. For example, we stay at Holiday Inns, or our favorite chain of hotels, throughout our

trip, we drink the same beverage when we arrive, and meet people dressed like ourselves.

Is Boorstin correct when he says that images and pseudo-events go hand in hand? A thorough perusal of his arguments tends to support his contentions. As he applies the concept of image, we can do no more than agree; however, an image need not be viewed as false. Andre Bazin, in his famous work, The Ontology of the Photographic Image, says as image is one truth removed (Bazin, 1971). Strictly speaking, a photograph is not the person nor the subject photographed. Bazin maintains that a photograph rescues its subject from its proper corruption: it enbalms time. The Egyptians through mummification sought to preserve their pharaohs for eternity. Modern technology, through the use of audio and video cassettes, capture mankind as a process: the figures are no long static; mankind is viewed in motion. How fantastic to see a twelve-year-old girl running through the woods playfully, as captured on videotape, twenty years earlier!

The documentary film as influenced by Bazin, has spawned yet another film; cinema verité (Mamber, Note 9). This style of film purports to tell the truth above all else. Cinematographers, employing cinema verité, attempt a non-manipulation of subject, or material, in their work. In this fashion we can be relatively certain that the event unfolding before the camera's eye is correct and true: a certain amount of trust and good faith is required of the viewer. The fact that documentary tradition is

accepted today secures its import for tomorrow.

Filmmakers find the filmic philosophy of Sergei M. Eisenstein and Andre Bazin equally beneficial. Traditionally their philosophies are diametrically opposed. The philosophies of Daniel Boorstin and Andre Bazin are also diametrically opposed, yet they both should gain acceptance by television critics. Both provide the television critic with unique perspectives on the impact of image.

(Application)

In using image as a critical style, the critic must view image from an ontological perspective. Is the image true or false? How does the image enhance our knowledge of the real world? Upon viewing the image of an individual, a corporation, or an entity, can we say that we have obtained the universal understanding of the material presented? Does the image impart information that brings us to a fuller realization of life as process; or does it beguile a truth that is ethereal and distant?

In a complex society where images proliferate, the viewer is easily misled and purged. Quite often the television viewer is led down a primrose path. We are made to feel that the world will continually evolve toward a better tomorrow. In essence we have become victimized. The nature of television is such that we have little control over our own destiny. How can we alter programming that requires us to spend more time and money than is available to us? Certainly, we feel a pleasure cruise is "just what the doctor ordered." But, our resources are

insufficient. In a society where capitalist is pitted against capitalist, the demands for an enriched life are translated into more material rewards. Is it no wonder that our youth demand a euphoria unknown to previous generations? How do we respond? In a world where many find themselves on the borderline of starvation, the wealthier countries seem concerned only with their own survival ad infinitum (Kissinger, Note 10). Image becomes a goddess who promises all, yet is unobliging.

Certainly, American television through the various genres promotes meterialistic value over spiritual and aesthetic concerns. The television critic must determine, through the philosophical principles laid down by Boorstin and Bazin, that what falls into the parameters is true or qualifyingly false. Preparation that enables the critic to make these critical choices is based on spiritual and intellectual biases. They require a type of humanity fostered by a zealous consideration for ethical principles, because nothing elicits more fear within us than to find that what is pertinent to our survival is missing.

With the new high technology at the disposal of creative directors, mankind succumbs to a form of persuasion never before felt. Unless the audience can begin to comprehend the impact of the new technology, they become easy prey. The critic, in the role of the gatekeeper, must examine for his/her audience the basis of manipulative media and its effect, in the hands of political and influential entrepreneurs (Brooks, Note 11).

The use of image as criticism is demanding; it determines what becomes useful in promoting the inherent interest of mankind: its survival. It seems ludicrous for the television critic to be concerned about the condition of mankind. But what is art if it is not life? The critic or artist is consecrated to the establishment of a better world. The critic in evaluating television images is telling his/her audience which images speak for cherished values in a world where hope has become obscured. How can the critic decide which image is false and which is productive? There can be no concrete foundation beyond ethical principles that objectively state the case for mutual respect and self-determination.[9]

An image, although elusive, flickers for a time dancing across the screen of our minds. Long after the performance, we are left to consider the implications of the material presented. As time passes, we as a race, seem more susceptible to conditioning. Without responsible observers, modern sages, we find ourselves in dismal disarray. The crux of the issue is tantamount to an unprepared society, due to a cultural and intellectual lag (Skornia, 1965). Television programming has progressed commercially and educationally; however, the viewing audience is still subjected to a plethora of mundane content that falls critically short of challenging their potential. The critic must be sincere in relating his/her perceptual view of television. Responsibility becomes the basis of the critic's intentions toward establishing sensible programming. In the adjudication of television programming, from the perspective of television as image, the

critic points to those images that reveal the greatest potential for human interaction as truth. Like the prophets of old, (s)he must set the crooked path straight.

Classification as Criticism

In mankind's eternal search for knowledge, many methods have been devised that present a schematic approach to the acquisition of information. Today the computer has become a household word and more and more American families are enjoying its use in their homes. The computer, however, is hardware and requires the use of software in order to function as intended. Software and hardware are terms that oftentimes are confused. Strictly speaking, hardware is the apparatus that utilizes the software; conversely, software is virgin material that is consumed by the hardware.[10]

The purest form of software is the potential program. Programs are a continuation of present available knowledge. Thus, programs are derived directly from knowledge. In a real sense, programs are to knowledge what hardware is to software: programs consume knowledge. What, then, is the substance of knowledge? According to Robert E. Boston's classification system, knowledge at its very essence is obtained via the senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. From this vantage point mankind is limited in acquiring information, because all information must pass through one of the five senses.[11]

Boston's schema begins when the individual encounters reality through one or more of the five senses. After the encounter (s)he labels his/her

universe. At this point the identification process is occurring. Identification through the use of language is perhaps mankind's greatest discovery. It allows for all possibilities and discounts nothing: convenience par excellence. The process of language is discussion. Once a "thing" has been identified, it can then be described. Description involves a thorough discussion of the "thing" already identified. Description is advanced when the discussion compares and contrasts two "things," as being similar and/or different: similarities and differences. Arriving at this level the individual is in a position to draw a relationship between two seemingly different "things" (the relationship between pen and paper). At this juncture (s)he states a rule ("Pens are used for writing on paper"). Next comes a classification that fully encompasses those "things" discussed (pens and paper are classified as stationery). The individual can now proceed to make a hypothesis or prediction concerning the nature of what (s)he has classified. (S)he might consider making several hypotheses or predictions depending on his/her notion. Of course, the empiricist will want to conduct an experiment to verify whether or not his/her hypothesis or prediction is valid. Ultimately, the individual creates his/her own model, based on conducted experiments. The model or paradigm becomes a representation that stimulates others in their quest for developing better models. Thus, the process continues ad infinitum. The search for knowledge is a voyage into the unknown where mankind continually seeks out new universes

awaiting exploration.

(Application)

The television critic will find that the classification system enables him/her to focus immediately on individual elements within the panoramic structure of the television phenomenon by using identification as a basic construct. Having identified those elements to be scrutinized, the critic moves toward the description phase of classification. Here great care is taken by the critic to describe accurately the selected program. Each genre of television, for example, news, documentary, talk shows, etc., requires a discriminating sensitivity on the viewer's part. Describing a scene from Harlen County, USA brings into play an approach different than that utilized in describing a segment of a talk show (Jacobs, 1979). For instance, makers of documentary utilize unique approaches, depending on the suitability of the selected material to be filmed. Just as cameras are positioned in desirable locations when filming a parade for the evening news, the critic must view each genre as if (s)he were looking through each camera's eye. To view each genre in the same fashion is to apply unfair and imbalanced approaches to the aesthetics of television. If the classification system is to be fruitful as an instrument of television criticism, then the critic must lay the proper foundation: Description is that foundation.

Television programs of the same genre can be compared and contrasted for similarities and differences, respectively. How, the critic asks, is

Barney Miller similar to The Jeffersons (both syndicated); how do they differ; what is their relationship? Stating a rule for these two programs or any two television programs is not difficult, especially when the genre is the same. Stating a rule, for example, "Barney Miller and The Jeffersons make people laugh," points toward classification. At the classification level, the critic can determine if the two programs being compared and contrasted belong to the same genre: in this case, situation comedy. If they do not, then a broader label must be used and that label may simply be television programs.

After determined hours of viewing, the critic hypothesizes or predicts what might occur on these programs in future viewings and what effect if any they have on their respective viewing audiences.[12] The Laverne and Shirley program conjures up many images for a variety of audiences. Common sense dictates that viewing several installments of this program enables the average viewer to make predictions concerning future installments. The critic as a keen observer postulates what (s)he believes will occur in subsequent programs based on his/her analysis of past and present shows. In order to verify his/her hypotheses, an experiment of his/her choice should be conducted. The experiment can be of a quantitative or qualitative nature (see Content Analysis as Criticism). Quantitative analysis suggests the use of statistics whereas qualitative analysis suggests the use of linguistics and/or semiotics. Designs for each can be as simple or as sophisticated as desired.

Finally, the critic may choose to create his/her own program or, more practically speaking, the critic will offer advice to television writers on how they can improve future programs. Writers are not always certain of why their programs succeed or fail. Sometimes writers stoop to questionable taste in search of popularity. The critic has the responsibilities of educating both the writers and his/her audience. Without intellectual feedback, in the words of Newton Minow, former FCC commissioner: "Television becomes a vast wasteland" (Minow, 1964). David Manning White, in Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America, tells us that television continues to hold the greatest promise for mankind (Rosenberg and White, 1957).

Criticism as Criticism

Many universities today have reduced methodology to the following: Historical Research, Descriptive Research, Experimental Research, and Scientific Research. All other forms of research seem to belong to one or combinations of the above. Methodology, for this writer, is vertical. By vertical progression the researcher can begin with the historical and advance through the descriptive and experimental methods, concluding with the scientific method. The scientific method builds on the experimental, but has as its goal a paradigm from which other paradigms can be created.

Criticism, however, is not methodology. Criticism advances on the horizontal axis. Where methodology has as its purpose the use of constructs to uncover and build, criticism examines that which is already in

place. All of the forms of criticism presented in this paper are, in actuality, styles of criticism. Their purpose is to place a work of art into its proper perspective. In some instances the critic can use the style as a Platonic approach where utility of the work in question is paramount; in other instances, the critic can use the Aristotelian approach where the work of art is examined on its own merit. Thus, style is concerned with providing for the critic a panoramic view of the horizon. Each style might be considered as a pair of field glasses that enables the critic to view accurately that which is at a distance. Again, criticism is style and not methodology. It seeks to scan everything before it.

Criticism as criticism is one step removed, insofar as it has as its purpose the scanning of criticism itself. The critic simply examines all pertinent criticism over a specific subject to see which critics and/or what criticism appears to be most worthwhile. In this manner a critic can better appreciate the work of art under specific scrutiny. Criticism of criticism can be employed in the sciences as well as in the arts. Mass communication, perhaps more than most other disciplines, can be placed almost equally in both camps because of the technology involved (science) and its program content (art).

(Application)

Today more and more critics are involved with television criticism because television has become the number one medium. The eclectic nature

of television that provides Americans with greater program variety has increased television's mass audience. The result has been that television, as a time broker, can sell this mass audience to American advertisers. Thus, television is in a position to charge vast amounts to its advertisers for television time. Television's time cost contingency becomes significant because Americans now have more leisure time for television viewing.

During the early forties, the film industry had not yet achieved, in the critics minds, the status of art. In retrospect, film was already a sophisticated medium by the early 20's; however, film would have to wait until television arrived on the American scene full-blown, before it could be accorded the same recognition as theatre (Kesselring, Note 12). Television is the new eclectic medium that subsumes practically every other art form.[13] That no single television critic has emerged in the United States or abroad is not surprising (Powers, 1982: 61-63). The demands placed on a television critic appear endless. For these reasons criticism of criticism becomes such a convenient style for the critic. It permits the critic to encounter other critics who are more able than (s)he to elucidate in a specific area of criticism.

The critic who employs criticism as criticism makes a mistake if (s)he chooses to consult only those critics who have achieved fame. Obviously, the reputable critics are important, but the critic must evaluate the content of what is being said by these critics. Generally

speaking, the critic should choose critics who are well-versed in their respective fields, but care should be taken to use the writings of critics who demonstrate a "recency factor."[14] Conversely, common sense sometimes can be the best guide. Educators view change as process; artists are responsible for a great deal of the change in man's quest for perfection; artists who have proven their "staying power," or have passed away, can also be evaluated as process (Bloom et al, 1971: 8).

In conclusion, once the critic has chosen those critics (s)he wishes to utilize, (s)he must be certain that the critics represented are treated fairly and honestly. Misrepresentation of their writings can only confuse the issue. If the critic will attempt, by every means possible, to be accurate and concise without sacrificing content of the respective critics represented, (s)he will find that much information will be communicated to his/her readers while at the same time preserving the integrity of the various critics.

Summation

This paper has presented a multifarious approach to television criticism. The suggested approaches to television criticism are: rhetorical criticism, dramatic criticism, literary criticism, cinematic criticism, content analysis as criticism, myth as criticism, linguistics as criticism, semiotics as criticism, phenomenalism as criticism, phenomenology as criticism, interpersonal communication as criticism, public relations as criticism, image as criticism, classification as criticism,

and criticism as criticism. An attempt has been made to demonstrate how each of these styles of criticism and/or theories and/or applications might be used to critiquing television art. Rhetorical criticism provides us with "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" elements; dramatic criticism renders a schema beginning with inciting incident and culminating with denouement; literary criticism conveys point of view; cinematic criticism offers Eisensteinian and Bazinian theories as represented in fiction and non-fiction films; content analysis as criticism can be quantitative or qualitative; myth as criticism is metaphysical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological; linguistics as criticism begins with a phoneme and moves to the sentence and beyond; semiotics as criticism begins with the figurae and ends with the syntagm; phenomenalism as criticism affords subject to object relationships with bracketing; phenomenology as criticism provides subject to subject-object relationships with reflection; interpersonal communication as criticism utilizes a small unit, dyadic or triadic, to develop trust relationships; public relations as criticism emphasizes communication by an individual or individuals, representing a business, institution, or similar organization, profit or non-profit, that has as its purpose communication with its various publics; image as criticism offers Boorstinian and Bazinian theories as represented in pseudo-events and, in reality, as image; classification as criticism begins with identification and culminates with paradigm; and criticism as criticism substantiates a "stylological" approach to critiquing the works of other

television critics (see Note 1); as such, each of the aforementioned is uniquely suited to television criticism. The potential for combining two or more of the above styles of criticism also exists. Finally, the television critic will find that when working with a combination of critical applications, as presented in this paper, the possibilities seem infinite.

Conclusion

Before a television critic begins to work (s)he must ask him/herself "What is it that I wish to accomplish?" The fifteen approaches to television criticism presented in this paper are not intended to be inclusive. They tend to incorporate the more popular and most recent styles of criticism, theory, and application. Obviously, a critic, like a farmer or a craftsman, must be familiar with the tools of his/her trade. The more the critic-scholar familiarizes him/herself with the style(s) of criticism, the more ept (s)he will be at applying his/her skills. That the need for better and more extensive television criticism exists and has been too long in coming is a moot point. My advice is to begin. Let the information presented in this paper signal a beginning. To borrow a popular cliche: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Reference Notes

1. Chesebro, J. W. Television: The critical view. (H. Newcomb, Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. In types of communication dramas, Chesebro lists five kinds of communication systems: Ironic, Mimetic, Leader-centered, Romantic, and Mythical.

2. Keen, S. Man and myth: A conversation with Joseph Campbell. Psychology Today, July 1971, pp. 36-39 & 86-95. In the interview, the notion of myth is treated very specifically, however, Campbell does not discuss the ontological side of metaphysics.

3. Aristotle. [Aristotle's rhetoric and poetics.] (W. Rhys Roberts & Ingram Bywater, trans.). New York: The Modern Library, 1954. See p. 3 where "ethos," "pathos," and "logos" are introduced; also see: Kennedy, G. Aristotle on invention, The art of persuasion in Greece. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

4. Mallo, J. España: Sinteses de su civilización. New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957. See p. 9 where pictures and references are made concerning the paintings in the caves of Altamira, situated in the province of Santander.

5. Shroyer, F. B., & Gardemal, L. G. A short history of drama, Types of drama. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1970. "Somewhere around the thirteenth century B.C. the worship of the god Dionysus was introduced into Greece, about five centuries later

contests for choral dances were being held in connection with Dionysean festivals" (my emphasis).

6. Newcomb, H. Personal interview following the presentation of his paper to the Southern Speech Communication Association Convention. Hot Springs, Arkansas, April 1982.

7. Meussling, V. Telephone interview after her address to the Public Relations Society of America and prior to her departure to teach public relations courses at the University of Madrid, July 1984. Dr. Meussling heads the public relations program at Indiana State University. As a colleague of mine at Valdosta State College, she introduced PR concepts that are now being utilized internationally: She uses an eclectic approach stressing communication as the fundamental skill. My definition, in part, is based on her ideas.

8. At the turn of the century, England was concerned about its railway system in Argentina. They were afraid they might lose it due to Argentine nationalism. The Argentines, who were not yet in a position to nationalize the British railway system in their country, through skillful public relations convinced the British that they had no need to be frightened. History records that Argentina nationalized the British railway system a few years later. See: Oseguera, A. A. Argentina: The role of the participatory media in political and economic development, Communications, mass media and development conference, October 1983, (Northwestern University Microfilms).

9. Mamber, S. Cinema verité in America: Studies in uncontrolled documentary. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974. Cinema Verité attempts to capture life on the run. The film/video maker must avoid using manipulation of subject matter and let the material or action evolve naturally before the camera without conventional direction.

10. Kissinger says world debt represents danger to West. Charleston, IL: Times-Courier (Mid-Illinois Newspapers), June 1984, p. B-5. "One way or another, the industrial democracies will now have to face two realities," he writes; "There is no chance of any principal being repaid for a decade or more. Even interest payments will become politically unbearable unless handled as a political and not a technical economic problem."

11. Brooks, W. D. Mass communication: Senders and receivers, Speech communication. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1974. Brooks elaborates on Lewin's "gatekeeper" concept; also see: Lewin, K. Channels of group life; Social planning and action research, Human Relations, 1947, 1, 143-153.

12. Kesselring, J. Arsenic and old lace, 1941. In G. Freedley (Ed.), Three plays about crime and criminals. New York: Washington Square Press, 1974. In Act II, O'Hara speaking to Mortimer says, "I never go to the movies. I hate 'em! My mother says the movies is a bastard art" (p. 67).

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Endnotes

[1]"Stylology" is a word I have created to describe the study of style, especially as an approach to television criticism, just as methodology refers to the study of method. A researcher employs method; method builds upon method, moving along on the vertical axis. Conversely, a critic employs style; style follows style on a horizontal axis.

[2]As depicted in the Holy Bible, the story of Samson provides us with an excellent example of tragedy. Because he is unable to keep secret the source of his strength, he suffers the consequences of his sin. God permits him to regain his strength and he, ultimately, triumphs over his enemies.

[3]The character of Lucy Ricardo was not created in the classical sense: she possesses no great flaw and consequently is able to forego serious punishment. This factor is the most important element that separates comedy from tragedy.

[4]Bettetini prefers we continue to work on the linguistic or symbolic elements that, in part, comprise film language, as opposed to icon elements that create a different code or language of film.

[5]Even though we continue to explore "outerspace" with our various space shuttle flights, e.g., the Enterprise, the Discovery, etc., today, the quest for exploration into the human mind seems to be of greater concern, i. e., we accept space travel as commonplace, whereas exploring

the potential of the human mind presents us with endless possibilities. Our real fascination with television is that it is exactly that: A voyage into our "inner" space--ourselves.

[6]Products do not need to show a profit. Sometimes a company will maintain a line item, if the company is certain the buyer(s) will purchase additional merchandise/services.

[7]The McDonald's hamburger corporation's $2 million fund was created not only to assist the July 18, 1984 massacre victims, but also to maintain/reattain McDonald's image: public relations.

[8]Companies, such as Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and IBM, advertise around the world. Their advertising style is typically American, with an emphasis on youth, vitality, and efficiency.

[9]Self-determination is normally associated with nations; nevertheless, it has consequential meaning for individuals.

[10]Examples: movie cameras, television cameras, video playback recorders, typewriters, and computers are hardware; film, videotape, papers, and potential programs are software.

[11]Discussions concerning a priori and a posteriori are more aptly dealt with in philosophical treatises. These terms argue that knowledge can be known outside experience, as well as through experience, respectively. Only a posteriori judgments will be considered in this discussion.

[12]The critic alone determines how many hours (s)he feels is necessary to view a particular television program(s).

[13]Film may be considered the first eclectic medium insofar as it subsumes most other art forms. Film becomes the content of television, or videotape.

[14]A critic writing about Charles Chaplin, for example, might have actually met Chaplin and discussed the artist's concept concerning film: "recency factor" (primary reference).

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